This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07583646 4

DRAMATIC VERSES

DRAMATIC VERSES BY TRUMBULL STICKNEY

1941

HENRY
PARK
COLL

CHARLES E GOODSPEED

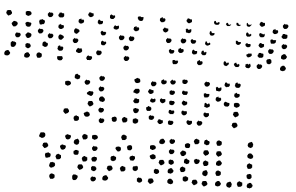
BOSTON
MDCCCCII

EN

COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY TRUMBULL STICKNEY

PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 1902

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
68097B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1940 L



D. B. UPDIKE, THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON

811 - S - 527-244 (B)

MY DEAR BAY: THIS IS FOR BESSIE
AND YOU, IF YOU WILL FIND ROOM
FOR IT AMONG BETTER THINGS

PARIS, 1902

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

C.O. TRANSFER MAY 28 19[illegible]

RESERVE
100th ST.

ГПВБЧЙА
ЬЛВГГЄ
ЙЄЛАОЙК

A TABLE OF CONTENTS

Kalypso, 1; *Once*, 5; *In the Past*, 6; *Oneiropolos*, 8; *Lucretius*, 14; *Age in Youth*, 16; *In Summer*, 19; *In Ampezzo*, 22; *Mnemosyne*, 25; *Lodovico Martelli*, 26; *Dolorosa*, 32; *Pity*, 33; *Song*, 34; *Ralston*, 35; *Driftwood*, 37; *Requiescam*, 39; *Eride*, 43; *Sonnet*, 71; *Sonnet*, 72; *Sonnet*, 73; *Sonnet*: *On Rodin's* "L'*Illusion*, *Sœur d'Icare*," 74; *Sonnet*, 75; *Sonnet*: *In a Churchyard*, 77; *Sonnet*, 78; *Sonnet*, 79; *Sonnet*: *On Some Shells found Inland*, 80; *Sonnet*, 81; *Sonnet*, 82; *Sonnet*, 83; *Sonnet*: *On the Concert*, 84; *Sonnet*, 85; *Sonnet*, 86; *Sonnet*, 87; *Lakeward*, 89; *Prometheus Pyrphoros*, 95.

Then sang Kalypso yet another song.
And it was waxen late. Beyond her isle,
Beyond the sea and world hung drearily
A full moon. Quiet was, except the wind
Lifting the water's murmur as a girl
May lift the fold of some sad Eastern silk.
One cloud, a presage, loitered. All the air
Was marvellous and sorrowful, as of
Jasmine sea-touched and roses pale with spray,
Of fading oleander, clematis
Grown weary on the garden wall. Anon
The cold salt wind did rise and scatter all
Odours: a little chill, then quietude.
So here did mix the land's breath and the sea's.

And still she paused. Her solemn lips, possessed
By that shy thought that comes before a song,
Were silent. And he raised his languid arm.
Clasping it all she turnèd on him then
The earnest heaven of her desirous eyes;
Drew him about her feet, against her knees,
Closer; and rested in his hair one hand.
The other alone, moving so musical
That her low notes were not more song than it,
Described the region of the sinking moon,
While soft and even a most unhappy strain,
The modulation of an endless grief,
Flowed from her lips. And tiredly she sang:

"She says: 'Follow my steps and take my hand
To where the shoreward sea falls colourless

And light is growing less, grows ever less
Yet quencheth never; where the seas expand
And shrink, where nothing altereth. I stand
Upon that melancholy marge of sand.

"'The Earth was made; yet then was I alone,
Walking this skyey meadow's nodding gold.
I've seen her freshest garden turnèd old
And men grow mortal in her beds of stone.
But I am still alone, and near the sun
Sometimes I think my heart is waxen cold
For having been so very long alone.'"

Her voice was richer with the widening song.
Light came and went, colour reposed and fled
About her face. There in the swarty night
She shone like opal, flickering weird flame
And crossed with splendour. On his neck her hand
Quivered; he felt her blood throb; languidly
Thro' closing eyelids of the soul he saw
The world dissolve in rosiness. She sang:

"'Come! so long have I looked on thee, so long
That my gold lids are heavy with desire;
My arms for waiting here in heaven tire;
My throat is tuneless with unceasèd song.
Where nothing is and day and night prolong
Each other in the sober twilight fire,
Give me thy soul for having looked so long.

"'I go below. Follow thou in my trace
And taste my solitude. There all the air
Becomes a lover feeling love so rare.

The chilly wave walks nearer yet to share
The rhythm and ecstasy of our embrace,
And evening jealous of our flushèd face
Goes out in sad retire and pale despair.

"'And while upon that solitary sand
The ripples burn away their fringe of light
And after me drawn down the heavenly night
Unnumbered stars fall throbbing to the land,
Let all the glamour of my courses waned
Possess thy soul in lingering delight,—
Let me in darkness feel thy failing hand.'"

Over his head she stooped. Her odorous hair
Fell thickly o'er his face. She kissèd him
With all the sleepy honeys of her soul.
Her arms did slip along his neck, his breast;
She kissed him lazily upon the lids
And languorously on the brow, she kissed him
Trembling and fiery on the opened mouth.
And slowly—
Wind rose. Rustles crept to's ear.
Thro' meshes of her hair he saw gray-blown
The thick tumultuous cloud blotted and streaked
With witchery of dead moon. The midnight whirred.
Sparsely the windy stars and feebly hung.
A little withered leaf blew by; it scratched
Him with its frittered edge. For it was autumn.
Autumn it was. Then did he know. No more
That year would he return, that year no more;
Rather, locked by the vastly circular
Walls o' the sea, the quashing roof of heaven,

Still suffocated in the changeless air,
Still vexed by incessant memory and recall,
Would stand in pain desirous of that dear
Fireside and her more dear and beautiful—
O curse to exile! Horrid ire shook him.
He started from her embrace, muttered, struggled,—
Then sudden came into dominion
Of his great self. He stood and said to her,
"Thou art more masterful than death. The life
That spurred me thro' the waters of the world
Was spent indeed,—and claimed again, O love,
Upon thy soul's warm shore." And amorously, she thought,
He neared her, lifted her. They drew toward
Her dwelling. To herself she seemèd queen
Over his love, and on the forward heaven
Of her retreating hope she lit the stars
Of happy hours, of happy days,—the crown
Of long desire; and drank of his embrace
A dear oblivion of sad doubt: the while
He plotted to beguile this woman here,
Gaoler of Fate, to drug her love asleep,
That ere his death tho' waxen old he'd see
Were't but the smoke of tree-clad Ithaca.

ONCE

That day her eyes were deep as night.
She had the motion of the rose,
The bird that veers across the light,
The waterfall that leaps and throws
Its irised spindrift to the sun.
She seemed a wind of music passing on.

Alone I saw her that one day
Stand in the window of my life.
Her sudden hand melted away
Under my lips, and without strife
I held her in my arms awhile
And drew into my lips her living smile,—

Now many a day ago and year!
Since when I dream and lie awake
In summer nights to feel her near,
And from the heavy darkness break
Glitters, till all my spirit swims
And her hand hovers on my shaking limbs.

If once again before I die
I drank the laughter of her mouth
And quenched my fever utterly,
I say, and should it cost my youth,
'T were well! for I no more should wait
Hammering midnight on the doors of fate.

IN THE PAST

There lies a somnolent lake
Under a noiseless sky,
Where never the mornings break
Nor the evenings die.

Mad flakes of colour
Whirl on its even face
Iridescent and streaked with pallour;
And, warding the silent place,

The rocks rise sheer and gray
From the sedgeless brink to the sky
Dúll-lit with the light of pale half-day
Thro' a void space and dry.

And the hours lag dead in the air
With a sense of coming eternity
To the heart of the lonely boatman there:
That boatman am I,

I, in my lonely boat,
A waif on the somnolent lake,
Watching the colours creep and float
With the sinuous track of a snake.

Now I lean o'er the side
And lazy shades in the water see,
Lapped in the sweep of a sluggish tide
Crawled in from the living sea;

And next I fix mine eyes,
So long that the heart declines,

On the changeless face of the open skies
Where no star shines;

And now to the rocks I turn,
To the rocks, around
That lie like walls of a circling urn
Wherein lie bound

The waters that feel my powerless strength
And meet my homeless oar
Labouring over their ashen length
Never to find a shore.

But the gleam still skims
At times on the somnolent lake,
And a light there is that swims
With the whirl of a snake;

And tho' dead be the hours i' the air,
And dayless the sky,
The heart is alive of the boatman there:
That boatman am I.

Come, Sakhi. Here within this edge of shade
We'll stand against the house-wall shadow-cooled.
There's no one left at noon in the Agora
To quib their fortune of my dozen birds.
The town—the world, these poor Athenians think—
Goes home and half asleep. Their prattling stops.
And burned by sunlight thro' the stifling hours,
Temple and house, statue and wall and road
Glow as hot copper.
But here shadow dwells;
And here by the sun-stricken afternoon
I stand leaning my head, and close my eyes.
A red light swims my brain awhile, then goes;
And unto memory I surrender me
Of all my master Brihadashua said,
My blessèd master pure and charitable
Who dwelt in Kashi by the holy stream.
Happy indeed was I, happy to count
A wizard in my kindred such as he,
Whose lips were wholly dedicate to truth,
Whose hand dispensed serene and wonderful
Peace to the spirit as a tree his shade.
To him, as one who rushes head aflame,
Kindled and dry with fever, toward shore,
I went; and most divinely pitiful
He taught me wisdom. To his voice I turned
As turns a lotus to the rosy dawn,
Filling with light, gathering treasure thence
To keep within its heart all the day long.
Sometime he spake, and all were blest; sometime

Silent we sat within the pale and help
Of all his thought. Continually did fall
The pleasant dew of patience from his eye,
Which looking ever beyond world and star
Was large as upper heaven. They were the days
When I had laid the world to rest within me
And, tho' with childish lips, did after him
Say as in dream the holy syllables.
He died,—rather, I heard him never more.
His final earthly errand, whilst his mind,
Quitting our vain and pitiable scene,
Dissolved, he gave me in trust. I quit the shore
Of holy Ganga's healing water-wave,
Long travelled, breathed of many airs, reviewed
Forests of sandal, where the Spring wind blew,
And tender-petalled lily-beds, whereo'er
The gray crane spanned his gracious, level flight.
Westward I followed, following every day
In quest of that he bade me. At the last
I beheld Sindhus, and my errand's done.

Hear, Sakhi, yet awhile my destiny.
The burning season shone. I stayed—too late.
The people's rumour told of a great host,
Yavanas named, from the utter unknown lands,
Generalled by a god and more innumerable
Than drops in rainy season; giants all,
That tramped about the edges of the world
And rose like a live night of crying birds
Across and thro' high heaven, then fell to earth—
What needs the many words? The Greeks were on.
One midday hour the world did leap apart,

And thence a thirsty multitude in riot,
With women, gold, flocks, armour, camels, coins;
Maddened with hunger for another world;
Each vagabond upon his empty heart
An empire's jewel scattering the light.
They sacked the land, then weary sat them down,
And with a million mouths and voices cried
They'd walk the wide and feeble earth no more.
So spake the children and the world obeyed.
Oceanward, between patient Sindhus' shores,
The locusts moved, leaving a piteous land,
With goods and gold and men, whereof was I.
Over a milky ocean torn with flame
And faced with greenish current, 'long a shore
Crusted with yellow sand, beneath a sky
Of endless sun, they lived and sailed and died.
Then for a little year the millions tramped
Thro' deserts flat as sea and gray as cloud,
Till they saw finally a shore. And ships
Bore them 'twixt isle and isle, after the sun,
Into the port yonder, Peiraios called,
To rest. 'T was home, they said; and all men wept.

I found their painted fanes and naked gods
And all these children babbling in the sun.
First did I hunger, knowing no trick or trade,
Knowing nothing that sold brings money in.
I talked not, nor could understand at all
This Grecian race of laughter, pleasure, song.
Pity, nor giving alms, nor anything
That makes the spirit pure, is here. They live,
And suffer the forgetfulness of life.

This is my tale: One night I walked abroad
Ere dawn a dreary hour, the market-place
More dark than any jungle. Cold it was.
I walked, when five cold fingers touched my arm,—
Beside, a Phrygian slave. Often I'd seen
Him and his fortune-table's dozen birds,—
"Oneiropolos" called, "seller of dreams."
He looked me in the eyes and took my arm
And led me here; awhile rehearsed his tricks:
Teased with his forefinger a bird's soft throat,—
Which leapt on't, pecked and picked one single card.
So did the Phrygian seven times, and went.
Over Akropolis was golden dawn.
Their naked gods all bloomed with light. The dark
In violet veils dissolved down the steep heaven,
And I stood here, selling to Athens dreams.

A dying town filled of a feeble race,
Small gossips of their all-expressing tongue,
Dancers and frolickers, philosophers
Drunken and sense-tied to the trembling world.
Hither from fifty climes men come and come,
Women and children come to see—'t is strange!—
This city of the old and marble things.
'Twas miracle, say they, what sights were seen
Here, Sakhi, one great hundred years agone—
For they count Time upon their nervous hand.
Galleys and chariots, beauty, victory, gold,
And gods they had, whose fair procession walked
With maidens, cattle, priests and horse; whereof
Up in the shadows of the fane, yonder,

Is marble picture by a studied hand.
So at their pretty game the children played
Building and singing on.—But all is gone.
'Tis vision, tale of poets, memory, nothing;
Now there is void shadow, blown by wind,
And the unstoried year is rolled away.

Here in the dying town I sell them dreams,
Here where the Phrygian stood. At evening
I knock at yonder gate in the High Wall,
And enter. Courteously a gentle man
Leads me within, to shade. Upon his lips
Their chattering Greek is low and lovelier.
I sit me down. My supper bowl of rice
He gives, saying, "My friend, rejoice in peace."
Down thro' his olive orchard, shadowy
And still and secret as the things of Ind,
The lily-like soft evening gathers dark.
Blest is his pious deed; for many hear
The spoken solace of his quietude.
To him what little coin I gather here,
Not in exchange or manner of the West,
I bring. For Epicurus aids the poor.

Peace! My words are many. Now peace to thee!
For yonder comes as ever at this time
Phryne, the rose and glory of their world.
Her veil is wove of sunrise, and her face
The white moon set between two clouds of black.
Her eye's a firefly and her voice a viol.
She walks as when a bird follows the sea.

Here daily falls her piece of gold,—she's rich
And timid as the shining meteor,
And hovers mothlike round her destiny;
For all her wings and beauty are for sale.

LUCRETIUS

SPERATA VOLUPTAS SUAVIS AMICITIAE

Slow Spring that, slipping thro' the silver light,
Like some young wanderer now returnest home
After strange years,
How like to me! to mine thy timorous plight!
Who quietly near my friendship's altar come
Where yet no God appears.

By many a deed I sought to win his love,
Made him a wreath of all my songs and hours,—
Most vain, most fair!
Now falls about the shroud my years have wove;
My evening drops her large, slow purple flowers
Thro' gardens of gold air.

To him this verse, to him this crown of leaves,
My supreme piety shall I commend:
This is my last,
Wreathed of what Youth endows and Age bereaves,
Bound by the fingers of a lover and friend,
Green with the vital past.

We sunder, he my Truth, I the desire.
I spread my wooing fingers, I would earn
His least address:
But parcels of the heaven-dispersèd fire,
Sky-severed exiles, we divinely learn
To suffer loneliness.

My life was little in joy, little in pain;
Mine were the wise denials, with none I coped

To win the sky;
And when I surely saw my love was vain—
The joy of his sweet friendship I had hoped—
I stilled. Now let me die,—

Now that the endless wind is growing warm,
Richer the star, and flowers on many a slope
Undo their sheath;
O let us yield to life's divinest charm
That lured us thro' the blasted field of hope,
Let us return to death.

AGE IN YOUTH

From far she's come, and very old,
And very soiled with wandering.
The dust of seasons she has brought
Unbidden to this field of Spring.

She's halted at the log-barred gate.
The May-day waits, a tangled spill
Of light that weaves and moves along
The daisied margin of the hill,

Where Nature bares her bridal heart,
And on her snowy soul the sun
Languors desirously and dull,
An amorous pale vermilion.

She's halted, propped her rigid arms,
With dead big eyes she drinks the west;
The brown rags hang like clotted dust
About her, save her withered breast.

A very soilure of a dream
Runs in the furrows of her brow,
And with a crazy voice she croons
An ugly catch of long ago.

Its broken rhythm is hard and hoarse,
Its sunken soul of music toils
In precious ashes, dust of youth
And lovely faces sorrow soils.

But look! Along the molten sky
There runs strange havoc of the sun.

"What a strange sight this is," she says,
"I'll cross the field, I'll follow on."

The bars are falling from the gate.
The meshes of the meadow yield;
And trudging sunsetward she draws
A journey thro' the daisy field.

The daisies shudder at her hem.
Her dry face laughs with flowery light;
An aureole lifts her soiled gray hair:
"I'll on," she says, "to see this sight."

In the rude math her torn shoe mows
Juices of trod grass and crushed stalk
Mix with a soiled and earthy dew,
With smear of petals gray as chalk.

The Spring grows sour along her track;
The winy airs of amethyst
Turn acid. "Just beyond the ledge,"
She says, "I'll see the sun at rest."

And to the tremor of her croon,
Her old, old catch of long ago,
The newest daisies of the grass
She shreds and passes on below. . . .

The sun is gone where nothing is
And the black-bladed shadows war.
She came and passed, she passed along
That wet, black curve of scimitar.

In vain the flower-lifting morn
With golden fingers to uprear
The weak Spring here shall pause awhile:
This is a scar upon the year.

IN SUMMER

It's growing evening in my soul,
It darkens in.
At the gray window now and then
I hear them toll
The hour-and-day-long chimes of St. Etienne.

Indeed I'd not have lived elsewhere
Nor otherwise,
Nor as the dreary saying is
Been happier,
To wear the love of life within my eyes.

My heart's desolate meadow ways,
All wet and green,
Opened for her to wander in
A little space.
I'd have it even so as it has been.

I've lived the days that fly away,
I have a tale
To tell when age has made me pale
And hair of gray
Excuse the fancy shaking out her sail.

No one shall know what I intend.
Even as I feel
The aching voices make appeal
And swell and blend,
It seems to me I might stoop down to kneel

In memory of that day in June
When, all the land

Lying out in lazy summer fanned
Now and anon
By dying breezes from the Channel strand,

With nothing in our lives behind,
Nothing before,
In sunlight rich as melting ore
And wide as wind
We clomb the donjon tower of old Gisors

Thro' the portcullis botched in wood
And up, in fear,
A laddered darkness of a stair,
Up to the good
Sun-stricken prospect and the dazzling air.—

Even now I shade my breaking eyes.—
And by her side
Surely she saw my heart divide
Like paradise
For her to walk abroad in at noon-tide.

It swims about my memory.
I feel around
The country steeped in summer swound;
I feel the sigh
That all these years within her breast was bound.

Her fingers in my hand are laid.
I seem to gaze
Into the colours of her face,
And there is made
A quiver in my knees like meadow-grass'.

That time I lived the life I have:
A certain flower
Blooms in a hundred years one hour,
And what it gave
Is richer, no, nor more, but all its power.

The chimes have ended for to-day.
After midnight
Solitude blows her candle out;
Dreams go away,
And memory falls from the mast of thought.

IN AMPEZZO

Only once more and not again—the larches
Shake to the wind their echo, "Not again,"—
We see, below the sky that over-arches
Heavy and blue, the plain

Between Tofana lying and Cristallo
In meadowy earths above the ringing stream:
Whence interchangeably desire may follow,
Hesitant as in dream,

At sunset, south, by lilac promontories
Under green skies to Italy, or forth
By calms of morning beyond Lavinores
Tyrolward and to north:

As now, this last of latter days, when over
The brownish field by peasants are undone
Some widths of grass, some plots of mountain clover
Under the autumn sun,

With honey-warm perfume that risen lingers
In mazes of low heat, or takes the air,
Passing delicious as a woman's fingers
Passing amid the hair;

When scythes are swishing and the mower's muscle
Spans a repeated crescent to and fro,
Or in dry stalks of corn the sickles rustle,
Tangle, detach and go,

Far thro' the wide blue day and greening meadow
Whose blots of amber beaded are with sheaves,

Wherever pallidly a cloud-shadow
Deadens the earth and leaves:

Whilst high around and near, their heads of iron
Sunken in sky whose azure overlights
Ravine and edges, stand the gray and maron
Desolate Dolomites,—

And older than decay from the small summit
Unfolds a stream of pebbly wreckage down
Under the suns of midday, like some comet
Struck into gravel stone.

Faintly across this gold and amethystine
September, images of summer fade;
And gentle dreams now freshen on the pristine
Viols, awhile unplayed,

Of many a place where lovingly we wander,
More dearly held that quickly we forsake,—
A pine by sullen coasts, an oleander
Reddening on the lake.

And there, each year with more familiar motion,
From many a bird and windy forestries,
Or along shaking fringes of the ocean
Vapours of music rise.

From many easts the morning gives her splendour;
The shadows fill with colours we forget;
Remembered tints at evening grow tender,
Tarnished with violet.

Let us away! soon sheets of winter metal
On this discoloured mountain-land will close,

While elsewhere Spring-time weaves a crimson petal,
Builds and perfumes a rose.

Away! for here the mountain sinks in gravel.
Let us forget the unhappy site with change,
And go, if only happiness be travel
After the new and strange:—

Unless 't were better to be very single,
To follow some diviner monotone,
And in all beauties, where ourselves commingle,
Love but a love, but one,

Across this shadowy minute of our living,
What time our hearts so magically sing,
To meditate our fever, simply giving
All in a little thing?

Just as here, past yon dumb and melancholy
Sameness of ruin, while the mountains ail,
Summer and sunset-coloured autumn slowly
Dissipate down the vale;

And all these lines along the sky that measure,
Sorapis and the rocks of Mezzodì
Crumble by foamy miles into the azure
Mediterranean sea:

Whereas to-day at sunrise, under brambles,
A league above the moss and dying pines
I picked this little—in my hand that trembles—
Parcel of columbines.

MNEMOSYNE

It's autumn in the country I *remember.*

How warm a wind blew here about the ways!
And shadows on the hillside lay to slumber
During the long sun-sweetened summer-days.

It's cold abroad the country I *remember.*

The swallows veering skimmed the golden grain
At midday with a wing aslant and limber;
And yellow cattle browsed upon the plain.

It's empty down the country I *remember.*

I *had a sister lovely in my sight:*
Her hair was dark, her eyes were very sombre;
We sang together in the woods at night.

It's lonely in the country I *remember.*

The babble of our children fills my ears,
And on our hearth I *stare the perished ember*
To flames that show all starry thro' my tears.

It's dark about the country I *remember.*

There are the mountains where I *lived. The path*
Is slushed with cattle-tracks and fallen timber,
The stumps are twisted by the tempests' wrath.

But that I *knew these places are my own,*
I'd ask how came such wretchedness to cumber
The earth, and I *to people it alone.*

It rains across the country I *remember.*

O *Gaddi, ope the casement, open wide*
And prop my pillow. But the window square
Of light, of sky! tho' skies of Sicily
Are not Firenze's. Ah, *Firenze mine!*
Darkly I *feel how's wasting all my life*
And dulls my brain; Death's *guessing at my name.*
But utter strange it is to die. The *word*
"Life" *to my ear rings mournful-rich and stings*
The sleepy nerve of longing. This *is pain—*
To stifle far from home, the heart suppressed
By a handful of such years as other men
Make nought of. Mercy *of* God, *what mother e'er*
Fashioned a heart so brittle, a head and brain
Whereof the tissues crack with fever? Why
Live? to have tasted life?—and die of't! aye,
'T*was little more.*
The silly, silly tears.
But Gaddi, look, my head, my arm! Indeed
Think you that I *revive?* Meseemeth *now*
The Spring *should soften* Fiesole *to flower*
And Colli *meadows show to every wind*
New petals of anemony. How often
By the divine immemorable days,
By sober afterlight when marvel is
And all Firenze *turns a smouldering gold—*
How oft upon the hillside have we heard
The melancholy ritornello! Ah
What Springs *were they!* Tell *me if ever, since,*
The night was moonful, or a woman's eye
Tearfully asked a softer question?

How waved the paling heaven's embroidery,
What wonder woke the odoured bloom of earth,
What music had the tongue of Tuscany,
What rhymes! How large a burial is the Past!

And thence away to Rome, *to sovran* Rome.
What were the sickly earth without its Rome,
Its gorgeous city where the revels are,
Dice and cards and the old ecstatic wine
That glints dark ruby, and superbly eyed
The rich and unimpassioned courtesans,
And Leo, Pope—
Yes, listen. One great once
I *saw the heavenly* Householder, *but far*
From's home. Come nearer, Gaddi, hist! Ye know
The Morosina *who has* Italia's *hair,*
Whose eye is somewhat strangely more than blue,
Who laughs like beech-leaves ringing in the light;
Her kisses indolent as a warm rain. . . .
I *dream. The* Pope *said* I? 'T *was winter night.*
The wind fell edged and pointed down the lane
Beneath the casement many have looked to, where
Stood I, *whistling a feverish tune. And straight*
'T*was oped.* I *entered. All about mine ear*
I *heard* "My Lodovico,"—*such a sound*
Became the long and melancholy name!
I *drew my mask, and darkly there* I *saw—*
Nothing, but felt and breathèd veriest Heaven.
About our kiss did move her tender hair.
Her breast to mine, her living arms, her brow—
The memory aches me that it is so dead.
She led me with a touch like melody

That being fore'er more forward in the air
Still guides. The cold and archèd corridor
We traversed, I a dreamer sunsetwards
And she the moving beauty of the day.
We climbed the stair, a sick moon-gazer I
Beneath her white and spirit-wingèd moon:
Till in her chamber with our eyes we lit
The owlish gloom about her tapestry.
Upon his horse the hunter moved asleep
And every falcon turnèd owl. Alone
The cresset flickered on the fragrant oil,
Shedding an old small light. And she and I
We sung the night with kisses low adream.
She said the wonder things in olden words;
She made a music languorous as Time
And rich as Summer, whilst her endless hair
Seemed Aphrodite's o'er the shallow wave
Thin-spread at midday. Odour never rose
Sweet as her breasts', and musically she
Did often turn her golden head away
That gazing I might weave and weave my soul
Into a necklace stringed of sleepy pearl
Without a clasp. —
But then befell the thing.
Methought I heard, I heard indeed a door
Noising — and near. I threw 'r aside. "By Christ,
A snare! now bless me — where's my sword? my mask?"
"I love thy soul," she sang. "Is 't Bembo?" "No."
"The whorish trade!" Her shaking hand she put
In mine. The step grew living near. I drew.
Then most superbly on the threshold poised
An all-black cavalier, save in the mask

Two fires. "By *Venus,*" *quoth,* "*a lady's here*
That loves too widely to love well. Good sir,
Suppose—" "A *sword's enough for courtesy.*"
He drew a wonder of Toledo blade
That rang like music. Masterly we fenced
And plied our gallant art Italian,
Till on a sudden her most delirious form
Rushed with a cry betwixt us. But she fell
Half-sensed. We moved. Then with an elfish pass
I pierced his hand. The weapon fell to ground,—
And he was flying,—but next about his waist
Her tender arms imploring pardon clung.
He struggled, stumbled, fell; the mask removed;
By Jesu God in Heaven, verily I
Then saw great Leo's face, the Pope's of Rome.
I shuddered as a reed, my brain rocked, all
Withered together crumbling in my soul:
I fled, yet with a backward look to see
The mistress of the gods make of her hair,
Her golden hair a Pontiff's chasuble.—

Dost thou believe I'm dying of darkish things,
Of poison—?
Ah, my heart's a crust of ash.
And glowing chains are piled about my head.
Raving? Not I. Give me no drugs. The world
I charioted have left in dust behind.
For I was Poet.—They said, they said "A soft
Poet, who stole Petrarca's melodies
And spoiled his robbery." Soft in verse I was,
A master had I like, forsooth, the rest. . . .

But nothing timeless said! Full well I know't,
The shaft is on my heart's bow, poised, unloosed!
While Raphael delves a ceiling into skies
Peopling his coloured thought, and Agnolo
Makes the fresh-quarried adamant to sweat
Ferocious agony, or in peace reclined
To look long looks abroad the shifting world.
I? why, I'd sing for them, I Lodovico
Martelli. I would send my songs full-sailed
Over the waves and waters of the years.
Let them be painter, sculptor: poet, I.
For your unquiet thoughts, the horrid strong,
I have them,—writ? not yet! but here's my heart,
Feel it! so tramped the innumerable host
When Rome was burned. And very vast a tale
Were half its history. Often have I stood
On hills high up, by sorry coasts, alone
Passing my vision angrily. I thought
To have plucked the yellow comets by their hair,
To have braided meteors, and from 'hind the moon
Robbed her society of chanting tides.
I'd stand, my back to the seaward cliffs, at bay
And fight the wave. Completed earth's a leaf
Turning in space along with the other dust
That blinds the eye of God.
Away, away!
Canst see the waters from the window? Help,
Help, sir. I've clomb Vesuvius of old,
Tasting its breath—'t was half so steep. Behold,
Yon rolls in wide and worldly rhythm the sea,
Greatest and eldest poet. Yonder chants
The epic wave in rich monotony.

Mine eye seems big as heaven. And far abroad
From Even's distaff floats the purple wool.
Wet-eyed she sits; the light for love of her
Becomes a moon but to behold her die—
The moon—Firenze! Is Firenze near?
Methinks 't were half a journey.
Ah, but were we there!
How fresh her lip is graven on my heart.
I see her, palely. But—tell me, who knows—
Is she not waxen, like me, somewhat old?
For something long has happened. All's ago.
I was ages ago, and in the world
We were together young. Say, am I dead
That I'm so far? Perhaps shall I return.
Bid Laura wait for April; I return,
I that so endless loved her, love her. Say:
"Within the colour-cupped anemonies
Lieth his heart, and all the leaves are he.
The gentle ecstasy of earth, the wind
That lifts so happily thy hair is he,
And he the Spring that holds thee all about."
O Gaddi, I shall not return. My mood
Is his who sits upon a farther shore,
Waiting and sick.
It's night and strangely cold.
To bed! 't is bitter cold. My very breast
Quivers. Hold me, good Gaddi,—or I shake
To death. My body's dry. Christ, what a world!
Water, good soul, water! Hold thou the cup.

DOLOROSA

Thou hadst thy will.
How weary sounds the rain!
The firelight wanders in the window-pane.
Thou art still.

Let me a space,
Now that the daylight dies,
Lie back against thee and with upward eyes
Love thy face.

Forgive my fear,
But—darling—hold me fast!
A little while the heartache will be past.
Patience, dear.

Give me thy hands
And bending closely o'er
Lay thy two lips to mine for evermore.
Death commands.

PITY

An old light smoulders in her eye.
There! she looks up. They grow and glow
Like mad laughs of a rhapsody
That flickers out in woe.

An old charm slips into her sighs,
An old grace sings about her hand.
She bends: it's musically wise.
I cannot understand.

Her voice is strident; but a spell
Of fluted whisper silkens in—
The lost heart in a moss-grown bell,
Faded—but sweet—but thin.

She bows like waves—waves near the shore.
Her hair is in a vulgar knot—
Lovely, dark hair, whose curves deplore
Something she's well forgot.

She must have known the sun, the moon,
On heaven's warm throat star-jewels strung—
It's late. The gas-lights flicker on.
Young, only in years, but young!

One might remind her, say the street
Is dark and vile now day is done.
But would she care, she fear to meet—
But there she goes—is gone.

SONG

A *bud has burst on the upper bough*
(T*he linnet sang in my heart to-day*);
I *know where the pale green grasses show*
B*y a tiny runnel, off the way,*
A*nd the earth is wet.*
(A *cuckoo said in my brain:* "N*ot yet.*")

I *nabbed the fly in a briar rose*
(T*he linnet to-day in my heart did sing*);
L*ast night, my head tucked under my wing,*
I *dreamed of a green moon-moth that glows*
T*hro' ferns of* J*une.*
(A *cuckoo said in my brain:* "S*o soon?*")

G*ood-bye, for the pretty leaves are down*
(T*he linnet sang in my heart to-day*);
T*he last gold bit of upland's mown,*
A*nd most of summer has blown away*
T*hro' the garden gate.*
(A *cuckoo said in my brain:* "T*oo late.*")

To thee, that all this wretchedness be ended
And I become in my disaster free,
I bring my broken life to be amended.
Take me, O sea,

O sea of California, thou Pacific,
For which the multitude of mortals bound
Go trembling headlong down and with terrific
Outcry are drowned.

Take me out of the earth that I remain not
To tell to gossips in a hovel tales
Of what I was. I who have squandered cannot
Play with the scales.

I who with power and riches stood surrounded
And gave as princes, and without a throne
Was King the greater that for name I sounded
Only my own:

I must have gone away, not die nor wither
But vanish like a rolling sound of brass,
A comet burst which — without whence or whither
Or wherefore — was.

For men born out of yesterday are yestern,
For men to-day are of to-day. And we,
We need only ourselves we men of Western
Democracy.

By my own sinews and own brain, unweakened
By lineage and generations, I
Did what I did, and with the wide world reckoned
To live and die.

I *gave and had no memory of measure.*
O*thers can tell who rollicked at my feast;*
A*nd in my palace there was greater pleasure*
T*han in the* East.

I *did enjoy and drank the beaker frothing;*
I *have kindled the splendours every one.*
T*ho' my magnificence to-day be nothing,*
I *say,* I *won,—*

I *won.* A*nd fortune cast me her dismissal!*
O*f traps and treasures whereof* I *could say*
'T*is mine! there's not so much as rubbish.* T*his all*
W*as yesterday.*

S*qualid and sad where* I *before did conquer,*
D*oubtless again* I *could have victory,*
A*gain lie in the golden gates at anchor—*
R*eceive me, sea!*

T*here sinks the sun in dusts of sulphur glowing*
G*ibbous and red; and flaking toward the shore*
L*ike hosts of scarlet willow-leaves bestrewing*
T*he sapphire floor.*

A*nd from the country evening scarce arisen*
O*ut of the flowering oranges the breeze,—*
T*he breeze will carry me to the horizon,*
T*o silences*

O*f sky and wave, the dark, the swirling eddy,*
T*he sinking down out of the vital air,*
A*nd down out of myself, down from the giddy*
G*lories that were.*

I

Heaven is lovelier than the stars,
The sea is fairer than the shore;
I've seen beyond the sunset bars
A colour more.

A thought is floating round my mind,
And there are words that will not come.
Do you believe, as I, the wind
Somewhere goes home?

II

In grassy paths my spirit walks.
The earth I travel speaks me fair
And still thro' many voices talks
Of that deep oneness which we are.

I love to see the rolling sod
Mixing and changing ever grow
To other forms,—and this is God
And all of God and all we know.

I love to feel the dead dust whirled
About my face, to touch the dust;
And this large muteness of the world
Gives me vitality of trust.

Here on the earth I lie a space,
The quiet earth that knows no strife.
I mix with her and take my place
In the dark matter that is life.

III

I *saw the moon and heard her sing,*
I *saw her sing and heard the moon.*
F*or light and song went wing and wing.*

S*o many a ship and many a star*
A*broad the sky and sea are two.*
W*e know it not for being far.*

S*o two fair flowers make a whole*
I*n corner meadows of the spring.*
I*t takes two hearts to make a soul;*

A*nd down the cloudy days they fare*
M*arried in* Beauty, *as of old*
T*he lovers thro' the infernal air.*

IV

B*etween the sun and moon*
A *voice now vague now clear—*
D*o you hear?—*
S*ays "*W*ander on."*

A*nd on the hearthstone black*
T*he embers poignantly—*
D*o you see?—*
S*pell "Come back."*

REQUIESCAM

Come to the window! You're the painter used
To shadow-in pools of light far out to sea,
Or fix it where the solitary wave
Rears with a shimmering scoop before the shore,—
A glorious wave! But now look out awhile
And love my view, from our suburban height
The squalid champaign zigzagged by the Seine.

I'm old, most of my labour done. My chisel
One of these days among the pellets of dry clay
Will lie and rust. I have immensely worked,
And hitherto seen nothing but the Form
Staring upon my eyeballs. Years and years,
Whether alone along the shining streets
O' the city or in companionship, I've looked
So long and seen away so fixedly
That space scrolled up, I seeing none the less:
Except some shape, some woman lightning-blenched,
Pinned to the ground, lay dreadful in my road.
O Labour, everlasting vanity,
That fills her cracking pitcher and falls down
Face to the earth, the water in her hair!

Into a bole of clay all my life long
I've stared my visions in, and, thumbing, seen
Materialize obscurely to a line
The long desire of Nature turning home.
So strains itself out of the sea a shape
With loads of weedy tide up to the land,
Straining to touch and taste, to lose and die,

Straining fore'er miserably unsatisfied.
Between the toad and lyre-bird, 'twixt the snail
And greyhound all is struggle: the which is vain.
For by our bases we're firm sunken-down
In the element: and whenever a little while
Yearning Illusion flutters up the sky,
She presently swings to the gasping pitch,
To fall bolt-like.

I say, all my life long close to I've stared
Into the clay, have with my chisel rasped
The marble off and stroked the lovely limbs,
The breasts of women and the lips of boys
In stone. Again, into the mould I've poured
The wretched desolation of my dreams
And bruisèd here and there the bronze. All this
I have done my life long, and not so much
As lifted up my eyes.

But now at last
I pleasurably look to either side.
For I would paint some landscapes ere I die,
One or two landscapes of the view you see,
The squalid plain meandered by the Seine.
There, when there's moon, thro' fumes of gray and black
The silver river curls away; beyond
It's night and vapid darkness infinite.
And sitting at this window, I suppose
A pallet on my thumb, and brushes and
The colours gently mixing with their oil:—
Leaving my marbles in imagination
For final solace in a softer art.

You, painter, have enjoyed with all your self;
You've little looked into the dark. But I
Forged in the night. It's *resting-time,* I'm *old.*
Landscape will ease me somewhat toward the end.

ERIDE

Dull words that swim upon the page
Thro' filmy tears of joy and pain!
Poor silly words, my only gage!
Mere words, recurrent as refrain!

Ye prove me language less than nought
And all the loss of utterance.
Ye give me scraps of withered thought
And sounds that meet as by a chance.

If I should find ye once again,
If you should come again to me,
Dull words about my joy and pain,
Mere words, what would ye signify?

ERIDE

I

Love, I marvel what you are!
Heaven in a pearl of dew,
Lilies hearted with a star—
All are you.

Spring along your forehead shines
And the summer blooms your breast.
Graces of autumnal vines
Round you rest.

Birds about a limpid rose
Making song and light of wing
While the warm wind sunny blows,—
So you sing.

Darling, if the little dust,
That I know is merely I,
Have availed to win your trust,
Let me die.

Brown eyes I say, yet say I blue.
I think her mouth is a melody,
Her bosom a petal sunned and new;
Her hand is a passing sigh.

Blue eyes I say, yet somehow brown.
Her mouth is the verge of all repose;
Her breast a smoothed-out viol tone;
Her hand is an early rose.

Be her eyes of blue or brown indeed,
Be colour or music what she is,
I nothing know. But my life's own need
Is the fancy of her kiss.

Clouds thro' the heaven flit
Aprilward.
There's the bud of a violet
On the sward.
Branch and breeze sympathize
Ere they play,—
I know that it's Spring to-day
By your eyes.

How shall I hold you fast
Now you are here?
A tremor, and you have passed.
And this year
Only of all is ours
Only is mine! —
I see in your blue eyes shine
All the year's flowers.

Hereafter I'll call you Spring,
Little girl!
And christen each clustering
Delicate curl
Some lovely meadow's name
In the South,
Where they say that music and youth
Stay the same.

I *held these tulips first, before*
B*ringing you them.*
I *passed the love* I *bear you o'er*
F*lower and stem.*
A*nd* I *would leave them at your door,—*

I*f at your heart's door they might stand!*
K*eeping awhile*
T*he world behind their petals and*
C*rimson smile,—*
L*ike seas hid by a meadow-land.*

A *trill of leaves is in the wold;*
I *feel the wings of summer pass,*
A*nd sunlight in big drops of gold*
F*alls on the seedy feathered grass.*

S*ome tiny cuckoo never seen*
B*lows his own echo mild as mist.*
A *deer there, stirring in the green!*
A *squirrel, where the branches kissed.*

F*ar through, a sweep of aspen-boughs*
A*nd birches whitening tow'rd the crest*
R*eclines, like river-grass, and flows*
A*long the summer to the* W*est,*

F*arther away, till last of all*
I*n milky hazes lying furled*
Is—*nothing more.* 'T*is we recall*
I*nfinity back to the world.*

In the bow-window that looks out
Over the sunset-coloured bay
We sat one evening, wondering and in doubt.

The water plashing on the quay
Roused the warm air, and half-awake
One hill we knew was changing golden-gray.

We strained our sight upon the lake;
We dared not anything to say,
For fear your heart and mine might haply break.

Our tired eyes soon filled with tears,
And we said nothing. But your hand
Was like a heart that understands and hears.

We missed the sunset, love, to-night—
The sunset on the sea that sings,
Folding about its heart of light
The large and melancholy wings.

A snowy gull may've moved along
The rose and gray and violet bands,
Serene as thought and pure as song,
Beyond our line of open sands;

A moonbeam on the fisher net,
A sail that lay upon the sea,
A rim of pebbles darkly wet:
It all was not for you and me.

A sunset lost, a life foregone!
Beauty that asked our heart and died!

What said we? did we match the Sun
With aught of Heart, my love?—My bride,

One look you gave was twice a sky.
I kissed your hand, you said a word
That greater is for melody
Than all the tides a coast-land heard.

One sunset lost, one look the more!—
The night is quieting the foam.
Hear you? "Come," says the endless shore,
And all the waves in murmur, "Come."

He rests upon her knee his tired head;
His eye, long worried, sleeps;
And she, whose perfect love has nothing said,
Her hand upon his forehead keeps.

Thro' darkening windows blows the ancient spring;
A planet trembles, kind.
Her large wet eyes are vastly wondering,
Her happy love resembles wind.

The breeze about her finger stirs his hair,
And her breath rises, falls.
So their unfolding presence thro' the air
In soft and low surprises calls.

He touches her in dream and follows her,
For nearness of her fails.
And the spring night of green and gossamer
Around beloved and lover pales.

II

I *hear you singing in my breast,*
I *hear you chanting in my mind.*
I*s it the wind?*

I *feel your form upon my eyes,*
I *feel your fingers press my sight.*
I*s it the night?*

I *hear the little noise of feet*
A*nd footsteps come and come again.*
I*s it the rain?*

A*nd all alone with memory*
M*y brain grows anxious for the day.*
Y*ou're long away.*

"W*ill you look down once more, just once?*
D*own to the ground and keep your veil*
D*rawn o'er your half-guessed countenance*
A*nd smile—so frail?*

"T*hank you!* F*or* I *have had a friend*
W*hose image came most vividly*
U*pon my soul, when with that bend*
Y*ou looked from me.*

"G*one? Yes! you cannot think how far,*
B*eyond the uttermost of thought.*
S*he's grown, as far things do, a star*
I*n heaven's hand caught.*

"*But stars, you know, are very cold*
And always white. They never bless
Just you, and in the night's great fold
Grow vague and less.

"*And so it's sweet to feel sometimes*
A colour, gesture, sound—a turn
That makes the heart grow dull with rhymes
And the soul's lips burn.

"*Yes! sometimes fast about my heart*
Something troubles me that I knew;
I find a stranger made me start,
As now did you.

"*So pray don't think me rude. That face—*
For the mere memory I would die.
You've warmed my life with your—her grace.
Good-night, good-bye."

If you should lightly, as I've known you, come
And find me of an evening crying here
At open windows of a changing home,
While beyond garden, houses, tree, and dome
Fades out the day and year;

If you should gently touch my shoulder, and
Turning I'd see as with a sweet surprise
You there, above me and about me, stand,
While the warm sunset passed a lucid hand
Over your face and eyes;

If then you softly, as I've heard you, said
That all was well, I know not what or why,
But just for words' sake told me; while your head
Moved round, you passed away; and in your stead
An autumn night came by:

Still would the happiness of having stood
With one so nearly you tho' gone so soon,
Bring to my solitude a little good,—
As one who's gladdened in a midnight wood
For having seen the moon.

Sometimes you seem so far away,
The very noise of thinking lulls,
And, on my vision, colour dulls
To vapour with sick wings of gray.

I wander out of Time and Mind.
The sense of my own life is lost.
One thought goes touching like a ghost
That found yet knows not where to find.

And all I know is just the jar
Of chime that trembles in my ear;
And all I ask is if the year
Is never tired as others are.

You charm a window in the South,
Your brow seen by the golden star;
And through warm dreams the gentle war
Of thought lures laughter to your mouth.

The wind lulls in the olive grove
And all becomes a vaporous sigh—
Low preludes to your ecstasy
Who love too much to think of love.—

October is in midnight swound
With just a vague gray blot for moon,
And like a scum the rotting brown
Of dead leaves drifts along the ground;

While I sit waiting for a time
I know not how, and marvel forth
Upon the vastness of the North,
Till marvel mellows into rhyme.

I heard a dead leaf run. It crossed
My way. For dark I could not see.
It rattled crisp and thin with frost
Out to the lea.
My steps I hast'ned, I was lost
For all the grief that came to me.
For now and ever thro' the host
Of sounds that blow from shrub and tree,—
A little echo sharply tossed,—
The footstep chills me of her ghost;
And knowing naught I weep most drearily.

III

There's just a bit of twilight yet,
A glossy gray that floats the sea
From yonder, where the daylight set,
To me.

All else is violet growing dark.
Southward, a sorrow breaks the sky.
The tide in languor of its mark
Is high.

And old night thickens on the strand.
There is no motion but the wave's,
Along the leagues of listening sand
That raves.

And nothing now. The lighthouse lit.
If ships there be, they're far from coast.
All's safe. But something infinite
Is lost.

One spot where every day declines
In a last red ray
From the circle poised on a hill of pines;

One knoll, where an elm's twist-branches play
With the air, elate;
And below, our bench of a battered gray:

In summer, 'twas bright—when the sun sets late,
Too late for regret!
And the winds lie down somewhere to wait

While daylight goes and gray streaks fret
The heaven's blues
And round the mid-sky night's arms are met.

But we went to-day and the long sinews
Of our elm were lame
With wind that ran in the day's lost clues.

Early the sun set, vague and tame.
Thro' gathering mists
The rain fell chiding us why we came.

A drizzle fills the autumn day.
The sun will never here come back,
And weeds and foliage in decay
Lie draggled in the cart-wheel's track.

From blackened woods along the plain
A vapour passes out, a sound
Of boughs grown weak thro' nights of rain,
That sink and shatter on the ground.

The meadow turf is all a swamp,
There's nothing left of summer. Come.
The air turns dark and deadly damp.
Come, for it's very far to home.

The year for you and me
Is nearly done.
The leaves there, two or three,
Are brown.
Not a bird sings.
It is time to think of other things.

Your secret was my hope,
Your deeper name;
And you perhaps did ope
The same.—
Only the word
For being spoke yet was not heard.

And as a leaf that knows
It cannot meet
Another leaf that grows
So sweet,
Hearing it call,
Springs in the autumn wind, to fall:

So did I hoping doubt,
Till thro' the dark
Falling away, went out
The spark,—
Ever to be
A star gone down below the sea.

Not that, if you had known at all,
You would have done what now you do.
God knows, no blame shall ever fall
Of mine on you.
I only marvel that it all be true.

They say that love's a mustard seed
Upon the acres of the heart;
It spreads from one part like a weed
To another part.
Yet Spring is single and the days depart.

I *know not why, but so it is!*
T*hat pain is such a simple thing.*
H*ere to your hand* I *bring my kiss,*
A*nd yet nothing*
C*an tell you nearly what it is* I *bring.*

A*nd why?*—I*t's hard to cipher* F*ates*
A*nd* D*istances, as yours from me.*
N*ot science even separates*
S*o fixedly;*—
A*nd then we tantalize our destiny!*

Y*es, marvel how the chances cross*
A*nd weave these spider-webs of wire.*
M*en live who say there's gain in loss!*
A*nd yet* D*esire*
R*evives like ferns on a* N*ovember fire.*

I*t comes to only a memory.*
W*e have too many memories,*
A*nd somehow* I *believe we die*
O*f things like these,*
L*oving what was not, might not be, nor is.*

L*ike a pearl dropped in red dark wine,*
Y*our pale face sank within my heart,*
N*ot to be mine, yet always mine.*

Y*our eyes, like flowers from apart*
T*heir frail and shaded gates of dream,*
L*ooked all a meadow's light astart*

With sunrise, and your smile did seem
As when below a letting rain
The water-drops with sunset gleam.

I thought my vision was not vain;
I felt my cramped heart stir and move
Which now is pressed with little pain.

I dreamed the dream one wonders of,—
Your face of pearl, so pale and wise.
I saw, and murmured "Life is Love."

The dust of folly filled my eyes.
I sang, and opened in your name
Crocuses yellow with moonrise.

I played with shadows at their game;
The meadow thought my song was wind.
I called the sunrise up: it came.

Sweet sun-warmed grasses did I bind
In fancies of your hair. My song
Was you, and you were all my mind.—

The charm, the splendour, and the wrong
Will drive you thro' the earth, to try
Of you and pleasure which is strong,—

While I remember. Cry on cry
My autumn's gone. A horrid blast
Blows out my sunset from the sky.

Nothing is left and all is past;
Rain settles like a quiet air.

And as a pearl in red wine cast
Glows like a drop of moonlight there,
Your face possesses my despair.

Receive my love; I ask no more.
Receive, I have no more to give.
The heart and spirit of me bore
All of this little gift. Receive!

I fancied as in dream I passed
My arms afraid with care and strove
About you, to have gleaned at last
Some late and stilly wished-for love,—

No more the wild wide flames that leap
Out of a moment down our years,
To smoulder in endangering sleep,
To glitter under tender tears,—

But something dear and gradual
Within your slowly opening soul:
Your nearly love, your nearly all
Which comes with years to be the very whole.

You would give otherwise and more,
Give much more and forget you gave,—
As over-seas in summer pour
The wide blue swinging breadths of wave.

Yes, and your vision of desire
Is richer than the sunrise and
Profounder than the sea and higher
Than the last light these heavens command.

You suffer thirst, and waiting brood
Impatiently one day to strain
From out this life of mood and food
The stuffs of ecstasy and pain:—

Till squandering in royal waste
The passion of your youth upon
Some pitiable heart, you taste
The wines and fever of oblivion!

I know.—Your dream is mine, that was.
And quickly far within your eyes
All of my life began to pass
And wander out in seas and skies.

But you, whom all my life adored,
While I go following in your way,
Can not so much as speak the word;—
For there be lies no tongue can say.

How strange it is, the point we lack
Just to possess the spirit's own,
And failing this, to tremble back
Among unfinished things alone!

Pass by, dear heart,—and take from me
This charm for which a diver dove
Of old down the unruined sea,—
And taking mine, give to another thy love.

IV

No, no, 't is very much too late.
I thought it mockery that you said
You loved me; but a certain fate
Lowers your voice and bows your head.
I tell you, you desire to wake the dead.

'T is pitiful so to drag out
The sorry quarrel in our souls,
Till even the blood suspends in doubt
And each full impulse backward rolls.
Meantime the hour regardless passing tolls.

Yes! think how year on year is gone.
You went your way and hummed your dreams
Of passion and oblivion
In lands where terrible sunbeams
Shiver upon the leaping arch of streams.

Your heart was violent and you stretched
Tiptoe after the stars your hand! —
'T was but a willow-bough you fetched.
The argosies of your command
Returned, saying beyond there was no land.

You cursed the woman's life for lame.
To do! you cried, and labouring
Like men bring in the distant aim! —
What was this aim you needs must bring,
Your one, your altogether desired thing?

You knew not, doubting day by day.
Like yours how many lives are lived!

How seldom all is given away,
How little of every gift received!
How the heart most of all is least believed!

When at your going my grief was new
And the long future all to waste,
I said farewell to more than you:
I wandered up into the Past
And wandering have imagined peace at last.

Still, perhaps, under leaves that lie
You'd feel the roots of sorrow end
Here in my bosom dyingly:
Mere threads they are, too frail to tend!
I've done with my own living, O my friend.

For what were gained if I were yours?
Fever and frenzy of the blood,
The pleasure which no surfeit cures,
Endless desire, hunger, feud—
And, at the end of passion, solitude.—

You know how, born by a small hearth,
While out in the sad dark it snows
And 'tis for months an unseen earth,
The soul as by remembrance goes
After the warm vineyard and burning rose,

To live long years by stream and hill
Within the southern light, with men
Who speak delicious language:—till
The pain of being alien
Urges one elsewhere yet not home again.

So *are our lives.* I *love you more.*
But *other hearts by destiny*
Must *needs possess what they adore*
And *have it, to live with and to die,*
To *strangle or soothe with kisses.* Not *so* I.

By *silences within a dream*
And *bird-songs of a spring sunrise,*
To *the onward measure of a stream*
Nearer *the sea where quiet is,*
I *love you more, much more, but otherwise.*

If I *have wronged you in the days*
Bygone *but unforgotten now,*
I *make no pleading for your grace.*
My *tongue is bitter.* Leave *me, go.*

You *have no pity, none.* You *live*
Impatient *and unreconciled.*
Nay, *were you a mother,* I *believe*
You *never could well love your child.*

You've *cracked the sense of life and death*
With *passions in you that despise*
The *thing you love and choke its breath,*
Till *unrecriminate it dies,—*

It *dies to you; and nothing then,*
Nor *art nor hope nor force nor spell*
Can *worry back the lost again,—*
Lost, *lost, and irrecoverable.*

And then, God knows, some things there be
Where never pardon yet was known:
What words have leapt from you to me!
Enough, henceforward I'm my own.

Yes, men are selfish—Tell me, you
Who pluck my thoughts for flying fast,
Ask all the years to be, and rue
The unalterably separate past,

What is this that is generous?
Can just a word we used to know
In childhood, commonly, to us
Have grown a vulgar riddle so?

Sometimes I *think we never met,*
Such immense walls of iron and ice
Between us infinitely set
Spring blind into the spirit's skies.

Sometimes I *think we never met,—*
'T had surely better been, to spare
This nervous wringing of regret,
This hope that tightens to despair.

We have not understood, for all
We deeply lived and clearly said.
And without knowledge love must fall,—
Like this of ours, that lying dead

Clamours for burial. It *is time,*
It was time in much earlier days,
Before we soiled our lips with crime,
That you and I *went our two ways.*

v

Now in the palace gardens warm with age,
On lawn and flower-bed this afternoon
The thin November-coloured foliage
Just as last year unfastens lilting down,

And round the terrace in gray attitude
The very statues are becoming sere
With long presentiment of solitude.
Most of the life that I have lived is here,

Here by the path and autumn's earthy grass
And chestnuts standing down the breadths of sky:
Indeed I know not how it came to pass,
The life I lived here so unhappily.

Yet blessing over all! I do not care
What wormwood I have ate to cups of gall;
I care not what despairs are buried there
Under the ground, no, I care not at all.

Nay, if the heart have beaten, let it break!
I have not loved and lived but only this
Betwixt my birth and grave. Dear Spirit, take
The gratitude that pains, so deep it is.

When Spring shall be again, and at your door
You stand to feel the mellower evening wind,
Remember if you will my heart is pure,
Perfectly pure and altogether kind;

That not an aftercry of all our strife
Troubles the love I give you and the faith:
Say to yourself that at the ends of life
My arms are open to you, life and death.—

How much it aches to linger in these things!
I thought the perfect end of love was peace
Over the long-forgiven sufferings.
But something else, I know not what it is,

The words that came so nearly and then not,
The vanity, the error of the whole,
The strong cross-purpose, oh, I know not what
Cries dreadfully in the distracted soul.

The evening fills the garden, hardly red;
And autumn goes away, like one alone.
Would I were with the leaves that thread by thread
Soften to soil, I would that I were one.

SONNETS

You say, Columbus with his argosies
Who rash and greedy took the screaming main
And vanished out before the hurricane
Into the sunset after merchandise,
Then under western palms with simple eyes
Trafficked and robbed and triumphed home again:
You say this is the glory of the brain
And human life no other use than this?
I then do answering say to you: The line
Of wizards and of saviours, keeping trust
In that which made them pensive and divine,
Passes before us like a cloud of dust.
What were they? Actors, ill and mad with wine,
And all their language babble and disgust.

They say that Cleopatra who of yore
Received the moon on her dishevelled hair,
Looking into his eyes, and breathed the fair
Low wind along Mediterranean's shore
When Summer swelled the stars,—Now at her door
The wanderer sees her like a jewel flare,
And drawn by passion thro' the beating air
To her, he falls, her dagger at the core.
Through rifts of scudding shadow, while his trance
Blackens in death, he feels about him lean
Her olive breasts and arms, and in her glance
Great wings of fire and midnight closing in:
His wasting arms do make a vain advance.
So I unto the life I would have been.

They lived enamoured of the lovely moon,
The dawn and twilight on their gentle lake.
Then Passion marvellously born did shake
Their breasts and drave them into the mid-noon.
Their lives did shrink to one desire, and soon
They rose fire-eyed to follow in the wake
Of one eternal thought,—when sudden brake
Their hearts. They died, in miserable swoon.
Of all their agony not a sound was heard.
The glory of the Earth is more than they.
She asks her lovely image of the day:
A flower grows, a million boughs are green,
And over moving ocean-waves the bird
Chases his shadow and is no more seen.

ON RODIN'S "L'ILLUSION, SŒUR D'ICARE"

She started up from where the lizard lies
Among the grasses' dewy hair, and flew
Thro' leagues of lower air until the blue
Was thin and pale and fair as Echo is.
Crying she made her upward flight. Her cries
Were naught, and naught made answer to her view.
The air lay in the light and slowly grew
A marvel of white void in her eyes.
She cried: her throat was dead. Deliriously
She looked, and lo! the Sun in master mirth
Glowed sharp, huge, cruel. Then brake her noble eye.
She fell, her white wings rocking down the abyss,
A ghost of ecstasy, backward to earth,
And shattered all her beauty in a kiss.

I

My friend, who in this March unkind, uncouth,
Biding the full-blown Summer and the skies
That change not, stayest unmoved and true and wise
That in thy love thou lovest not me but Truth,
What should we fear that Age corrode with ruth
Our loves, who love the thing that never dies,
Building us archways unto Paradise
Of all that greets the soul's all-flowering youth?
So is it, that often parted, rarely met,
And never blessed with gifts of genial Time
Wherein might grow the seed we have but sown,
Our hearts remember tho' our minds forget
How on from year to year and clime to clime
Stretches the love that makes of all but one.

II

Your image walks not in my common way.
Rarely I conjure up your face, recall
Your language, think to hear your footstep fall
In my lost home or see your eyes' sweet play.
Rather you share the life that sees not day,
Immured within the spirit's deep control,
Where thro' the tideless quiets of the soul
Your kingdom stretches far and far away.
For these our joys and griefs are less than we.
The deeper truths ask not our daily thought—
Their strength is peace, they know that we believe.
And whatsoever of sublime there be
Reaches and deepens and at last is wrought
Into that life we are but do not live.

III

Were you called home and I were left to grief,
I'd not go down disconsolate to the shore
And brooding mix my language in the roar
Of waves in spasm upon the tortured reef;
Nor climb the lonely mountain where the leaf
Sings its wide whisper and the ravens soar
From shadows of unholy ellebore
Loved by the owlets, blind and dull and deaf.
I should not loudly mourn and vex the earth
With strewings of my ashes; none would find
My reft soul's sorrow in the gushing eye.
But my dull world would be a world of dearth,
Cheerless the sunrise, the sweet sky unkind
And life grayer, my heart not asking why.

IN A CHURCHYARD

How strange, beneath the blue and happy sky
And the reviving greenery of the trees
So pale their shadow blows along the breeze,
To read on polished graves the little cry
Of this delirious immortality!
Well was it said for all, for each of these
"The poor in heart," who still in death displease
The flowers and wind and youth that passes by.
How but for them the children of the earth
Here, where the grass is fresh and glittering,
Would share with herb and beast the common birth!
And when they'd played away this day of Spring
How sweetly would they fold at evening
Their petals, hands, and wings at nature's hearth.

When I hereafter shall recover thee
And, on the further margin fugitive
Silently bringing up, if aught survive
The raging wind and old disastrous sea,
I disembark, O darling, verily
To hold thee to my heart, to feel alive
The tremor of thy lips, thy bosom,—it will drive
The dark in shreds out of eternity.
Sometimes I ask me why the morning sun
Returns or later, when the day is done,
I let the dreams about my pillow strain;
But then it sounds across my dying brain
Like torrents in the moonlight foaming on
Between enormous mountains to the plain.

Tho' inland far with mountains prisoned round,
Oppressed beneath a space of heavy skies,
Yet hear I oft the far-off water-cries
And vague vast voices which the winds confound.
While as a harp I sing, touched with the sound
Most secret to its soul, the visions rise
In stately dream, and lifting up my eyes
I see the naked mountains beacon-crowned.
Far in the heaven the golden moon illumes,
The crowded stars toil in the webs of night
And the sharp meteors seam the higher glooms.
Then shifts my dream: the mellow evening falls;
Alone upon the shore in the wet light
I stand, and hear the infinite sea that calls.

These are my murmur-laden shells that keep
A fresh voice tho' the years be very gray.
The wave that washed their lips and tuned their lay
Is gone, gone with the faded ocean sweep,
The royal tide, gray ebb and sunken neap
And purple midday,—gone! To this hot clay
Must sing my shells, where yet the primal day,
Its roar and rhythm and splendour will not sleep.
What hand shall join them to their proper sea
If all be gone? Shall they forever feel
Glories undone and worlds that cannot be?—
'Twere mercy to stamp out this agèd wrong,
Dash them to earth and crunch them with the heel
And make a dust of their seraphic song.

Tho' lack of laurels and of wreaths not one
Prove you our lives abortive, shall we yet
Vaunt us our single aim, our hearts full set
To win the guerdon which is never won.
Witness, a purpose never is undone.
And tho' fate drain our seas of violet
To gather round our lives her wide-hung net,
Memories of hopes that are not shall atone.
Not wholly starless is the ill-starred life,
Not all is night in failure, and the shield
Sometimes well grasped, tho' shattered in the strife.
And here while all the lowering heaven is ringed
With our loud death-shouts echoed, on the field
Stands forth our Nike, proud, tho' broken-winged.

Live blindly and upon the hour. The Lord,
Who was the Future, died full long ago.
Knowledge which is the Past is folly. Go,
Poor child, and be not to thyself abhorred.
Around thine earth sun-wingèd winds do blow
And planets roll; a meteor draws his sword;
The rainbow breaks his seven-coloured chord
And the long strips of river-silver flow:
Awake! Give thyself to the lovely hours.
Drinking their lips, catch thou the dream in flight
About their fragile hairs' aërial gold.
Thou art divine, thou livest,—as of old
Apollo springing naked to the light,
And all his island shivered into flowers.

Be still. The Hanging Gardens were a dream
That over Persian roses flew to kiss
The curlèd lashes of Semiramis.
Troy never was, nor green Skamander stream.
Provence and Troubadour are merest lies.
The glorious hair of Venice was a beam
Made within Titian's eye. The sunsets seem,
The world is very old and nothing is.
Be still. Thou foolish thing, thou canst not wake,
Nor thy tears wedge thy soldered lids apart,
But patter in the darkness of thy heart.
Thy brain is plagued. Thou art a frighted owl
Blind with the light of life thou'ldst not forsake,
And Error loves and nourishes thy soul.

When first this canvas felt Giorgione's *hand,*
From out his soul's intensity he drew
In lines most acrid yet superbly few
A man,—a soul, whose water at command
Of pain had stiffened to ice, whom grief had banned,
Till music even and harmony's rich dew
Fell fruitless. Poised, defiant and calm he threw
To the earth that wronged him his life's reprimand.
Yet, as he drew, a wind mellow with dole
Of past life as of sea-coast pine did rise
And warm the rigour of the painter's soul.
For his tear-moistened fingers warmed the frore
Hard colours of the cheek, and in the eyes
Set the large stare of Sorrow's *Nevermore.*

The melancholy year is dead with rain.
Drop after drop on every branch pursues.
From far away beyond the drizzled flues
A twilight saddens to the window pane.
And dimly thro' the chambers of the brain,
From place to place and gently touching, moves
My one and irrecoverable love's
Dear and lost shape one other time again.
So in the last of autumn for a day
Summer or summer's memory returns.
So in a mountain desolation burns
Some rich belated flower, and with the gray
Sick weather, in the world of rotting ferns
From out the dreadful stones it dies away.

As a sad man, when evenings grayer grow,
Desires his violin, and call to call
Tunes with unhappy heart the interval;
Then after prelude, suffering his bow,
Along the crying strings his fingers fall
To some persuasion born of long ago,
While mixed in higher melodies the low
Dull song of his life's heard no more at all:
So with thy picture I alone devise,
Passing on thy uncoloured face the tone
Of memory's autumnal paradise;
And all myself for yearning weary lies
Fallen to but thy shadow, near upon
The void motion of eternities.

He said: "If in his image I was made,
I am his equal and across the land
We two should make our journey hand in hand
Like brothers dignified and unafraid."
And God that day was walking in the shade.
To whom he said: "The world is idly planned,
We cross each other, let us understand
Thou who thou art, I who I am," he said.
Darkness came down. And all that night was heard
Tremendous clamour and the broken roar
Of things in turmoil driven down before.
Then silence. Morning broke, and sang a bird.
He lay upon the earth, his bosom stirred;
But God was seen no longer any more.

LAKEWARD

LAKEWARD

'T*will soon be sunrise. Down the valley waiting*
F*ar over slope and mountain-height the firs*
U*ndulate dull and furry under the beating*
H*eaven of autumn stars.*

T*o westward yet the summits hang in slumber*
L*ike frozen smoke; there, growing wheel on wheel,*
A*s 'twere an upward wind of rose and amber*
G*oes up the sky of steel;*

A*nd indistinguishable thro' the valley*
A*n endless murmur freshens as of bees,—*
T*he stream that gathering torrents frantically*
C*hurns away thro' the trees.—*

M*ountains, farewell! Into your crystal winter*
T*o linger on unworlded and alone*
A*nd feel the glaciers of your bosom enter*
O*ne and another my own,*

A*nd on the snow that falling edges nearer*
T*o lose my very shade,—'twere well, 'twere done*
H*ad I not in me the soul of a wayfarer!*
N*o, let me wander down*

T*he road that, as the boulders higher and higher*
G*o narrower each to each and hold the gloom,*
F*ollows like me the waters' loud desire*
O*f a sun-sweetened home.*

And as I pass, methinks once more the Titan
From in the bosom of the humid rocks,
Where yet his aged eyes grow vague and whiten
Weary and wet his locks,

Gazes away upon this brightened weather
As asking it in reason and in rhyme
How long shall mountain iron and ice together
Hold against summer-time.

Long, surely! long, perhaps! but not for ever.
Now here across the buried road and field,
Torn from the dizzy flanks up there that quiver,
Down to the plain and spilled

In sand and wreckage lies the avalanche's
Dead mass under the sun, and not a sound!—
The morning grows and from the rich pine-branches
Shadows make blue the ground.

To wander south! Already here the grasses
Feather and glint across the sunny air.
It's warmer. Up the road a peasant passes
Brown-skinned and dark of hair.

Some of an autumn glamour on the highway
Softens the dust, and yonder I have seen
Catching the sunlight something in the byway
Else than an evergreen,

And weeds along the ditch are parching.— Sudden
Once more from either side the ranges draw
Near each to each; beneath struggle and madden
Down in the foamy flaw

The waters, and, a span across, the boulders
Stand to the burning heaven upright and cold.
Then drawing lengthily along their shoulders
Vapours of white and gold

Blow from the lowland upward; all the gloaming
Quivers with violet; here in the wedge
The tunnelled road goes narrow and outcoming
Stealthily on the edge

Lies free. The outlines have a gentle meaning.
Willows and clematis, foliage and grain!
And the last mountain falls in terraces to the greening
Infinite autumn plain.

O further southward, down the brooks and valley, on
And past the lazy farms and orchards, on!
It smells of hay, and thro' the long Italian
Flowerful afternoon

Sodden with sunlight, green and gold, the country
Suspends her fruit and stretches ripe and still
Between the clumsy fig and silver plane-tree
Circled, from hill to hill

And down the vale along the running river:
The vale, the river and the hills, that take
The perfect south and here at last for ever
Merge into thee, O Lake!—

Sunset-enamoured in the autumnal hours!
When large and westering his heavy rays
Fall from the vineyards and the garden-flowers
Hazily o'er thy face,

And colouring thy bosom with a lover's
Warm and quick lips and hesitating hand,
He murmurs to thee while the twilight hovers
Lilac about the strand,

Thou, mid the grape-hung terraces low-levelled,
Lookest into the green and crimson sky
With swimming eyes and auburn hair dishevelled,
Radiant in ecstasy.—

'Tis evening. In the open blueness stretches
A feathery lawn of light from moon to shore,
And a boat-load of labourers homeward plashes,
Singing "Amor, Amor."

PROMETHEUS PYRPHOROS

TO E. F.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PANDORA.	PYRRHA.
PROMETHEUS.	EPIMETHEUS.
DEUKALION.	THE VOICES OF ZEUS.

SCENE. *The plain of* Haimonia. *In the centre, a rude stone dwelling, in the door of which stands* PROMETHEUS. *The voice of* PANDORA *always as from within. Total obscurity, nothing on the scene being distinguishable.*

DEU. [*crawling in*].
How *dark it is, how dark and miserable!*
PYR. I*s't thou,* Deukalion?
DEU. Ah, *thy voice!* It's I.
My *moment's journey seems a dreadful year.*
I *see nothing*—Where? *where? is home here?*
PYR. Yes.
Thou *soundest surely nearer.* How—
DEU. At *last.*
O *woman, what is this that makes us be,*
Threading *like worms the cavern where before*—
PYR. S*hows there as yet no daylight?*
DEU. No, *nowhere.*
This *dark can never lift, this heavy night*
Which *lies and stagnates infinitely.* No,
It *cannot lift,* I *know not when it fell;*
Scarce I *remember how seemed the white sunlight,*
So *debile is my memory and the brain*
Clean *hollowed out.*
PYR. All *round me and within*
It *is like pools of cold.* But *firewood*—*say,*
Bring'st *thou any?*
DEU. Aye, *but prithee to what end?*
I *crawled abroad the fields there picking up*
Some *herbs to eat, and fuel; but this* I *know,*
The *tinder holds no longer any spark*

A527-244 (Bl)

And fire is vanished irrecoverably.

PYR. Nay, try once more.

DEU. Try once again forsooth!
I care not, for the trial's vain. Once more!
I'll rub the sticks again together. No,
They breed no heat.

PYR. I'll pile the firestuff—wait—
Lest the one spark be lost.

DEU. The spark is dead,
I say, the light has ended, and henceforth
Misery and blackness unendurable
Stand in the eyes that saw, the hearth that burned.—
I draw no fire.

PYR. Where art thou? Flints, here—strike again.

DEU. So did I a thousand times and nothing leapt.
Alas!

PYR. Ah me, how dark it is and cold.

PRO. [*aside*].
It bursts the heart to see them suffer thus.

DEU. Strange, strange how since the fatal evening all
This mound of darkness fell. Father Prometheus
Then cheated God and offered him in guile
Wind-eggs and unsubstantial things: wherefor
We people pay the wrath that never ends,
Life in the dark and obscure loneliness,—
Knowing nor when to sleep nor when to wake,
Eating what herbs we gather here, abroad
The plain grazed by the kine we cannot find.
I hear them in the dark: they toss their heads,
Having slept much too long, and wander on
And trample, or halting with outstretchèd neck
Low stubborn none knows where, far thro' the night.

 [The cattle low.]

Hear them!

PAN. [*singing*].

As a poplar feels the sun's enfolding kiss,
And softly alone on the quiet plain
Yields to him all her silver trellises,
A ghost of green in the golden rain,
And trembles lightly thro' the shining air
Nearly unseen and melting in sky
Save for a shadow on the grasses there:
So over the earth and world am I.
The lips of Gods and mortals in a dream
Have lain on my lips of a summer night:
They fade like images down-stream,
But I have remained behind the light.
I give the giver more than that he sought,
And more than I give am I, much more:
As words are to an everlasting thought,
So less than the mother the child she bore.

PYR. What says she?

DEU. A time ago, the God of Gods
Zeus came to adore her, and the immortal arms
Closing about her gave her travailing.

PYR. Did he so?

DEU. Aye, like a master so he did.

PYR. She knows perchance then something, knows perhaps
If we're thus brutishly to suffer always and
Forever gaze upon this frozen void.—
Know'st thou our fate, Pandora? Tell me, mother!—
She has not heard.

DEU. Or sorrow blocks her ears.
For ever since God approached her, on the ground,

68097B

Her silence threaded by dull murmurs, lone
She sits up stonelike 'gainst the rude house-wall.
On hand and knee some while ago I *crawled*
Up to her, and, saying our heavy troubles, passed
Over her cool immobile face my hand;
I *kissed her eyes,* I *touched and held her chin:*
But all that while she said nothing to me,
Remaining passive, silent, pitiless,
Albeit her eyes were very wide awake.

PYR. *The pensive cannot sleep.*

DEU. *O misery,*
Would that I *were asleep a long long time,*
Beyond to-morrow and the summer's end!
Nay, sometimes down my dark bewildered brain
Stumble fantastic hopes that—like the birds
I'*ve found afield dismembered and undone,*
Like beasts that shut their swimming eyes, and leaves
That eddy dizzily down the nervous wind—
So we may fail and fall, be swept away
From what we are.

PYR. I *too,* Deukalion.
Labour at last is shame within the soul.
Have I *not faithfully day after day*
Uptorn the crusty earth and smashed the clots,
Scattering with thee the everlasting seeds?
Have I *not homeward carried every day*
Upon my head pitchers of spring-water
And packs of straw for bedding; and arranged
This place we live in cleanly and cheeringly?
Yes, here have I *within thy warm embrace*
Season on season, long with agony,
My brain sunstricken and my body sick

With travelling the dreadful acres, borne
Daughters and sons and sons and daughters; whom
At midnight then, against their crying, alone
I rocked in my exhausted arms, I suckled
And bending watched, till, as between my brows
It hammered thuds of slumber, very late
A little thin gray morning thro' the chinks
Told the disaster of another day.
And I have reared them and pitifully taught them,
My hand upon their hair, my broken truths,—
So laboured in their welfare! and in pain
So scourged their weakness! Woe is me, alas!
They never gave me thanks, no, nor so much
As looked a little in my hungry eyes.
Rather, against the time of strength, rebellious
They fret their freedom out, and last of all
Abandoning me for another world
Go down the sunset, being seen no more.

DEU. Yes, over fields we sowed they went away,
Trampling our harvest down. And here we lie
All hedgèd in with hoar and darkness, old
For staring on the sodden vacancy.
I would I knew what thing is in my heart
To stamp away so hardly! but for it,
I'm that much tired and aching-desolate
I'd pass away in earth.

PRO. [aside]. How horrible
Is now become their life!

PYR. It wearies me
To think of further being, against the time
Not yet bygone. For then it needs must be
My breasts will shrivel up, my faded flesh

Starve on the joints, and all the bloom I was,
The rose and perfume of their pleasure, shrink
Into a thing of shame.

DEU. *Beyond recall*
The labour of our lives now desiccates.
Our sweat was poured for nothing; we have bled
Wounded with ignorance in such a task
As irks one in the very memory of't.

PRO. [*coming forward*].
Then let us now remember nothing more,
But blindly hope in spite of all. And I
Who once defied the Gods, again to-day
Stand and demand our dignities of them.
We will not suffer thus, we will not go
Darkly and despicably tumbling down
The road of life. For we be something more;
Nor quite in vain infinite earth obeys
The plough we fashioned. All indeed is ours!
We are the crown of nature and her lord.

DEU. *O hold thy peace, desperate man! The Gods,*
Thy littleness to show, have now been pleased
To take, for matter of their anger, us
Who serviceably did our common task.
Thou pil'st our suffering up. What is thy heart
To bring curse after curse upon thy children, all
For idle show in the face of destiny?

PRO. *'Tis time we stood up as before, and looked,*
Brushing the meshes from our forehead, forth
Upon the sunshine and the rolling corn.

DEU. *To bring upon this woman and me, upon*
All generations, vanity and a life
Fatal and stupid as the stones.

PRO. Enough,
Thou art mine enemy! For a little pain
Thou givest justice to the dogs. Aside!
Hinder my thoughts no more. Alone to-day
I shall restore the light.
PYR. O father mine,
I nothing say who love thee evermore.
Give us the light and life, give us the hope,
That we may never question but abide
Unthinkingly by what is set before.
Lay thy two hands upon my brow, and smile
Tho' the night hide thy sweetness. Say the word,
Give us the promise. We believe thy strength.
For see, we suffer and so scarcely endure
That nothingness were better far, and ev'n
The being unborn a wholly happy thing.
PRO. Yes, woman, word and promise hold: I swear 't
By me and thee who bearest in the world
The sweeter burden and the sharper pain.
This night is not fore'er nor long, and soon
Between the cliffs of darkness issuing shall
The day its thousand arrows pour abroad
Here where we lived—and shall in other years
Live and increase, our children's children, on
To generations jealous as the Gods.
This will I do, and if they stood in rank,
Yet will I storm them, winning back the fire
And scattering the hope that cannot die.
DEU. What misery will be ours!
PYR. Speak to the end.
'T is sweet to dream on what not yet has been.
PRO. 'T were sure a shame to grovel at the doors

[illegible] where the Lord is I.

[illegible] away!

To change and pass away,
[illegible] some mastery, we
[illegible] oppression, we endure
[illegible] and hope dissatisfied,
[illegible] struggling, at the last
[illegible] and the human end.
[illegible] for moral man, only a little space
[illegible] dubious interval
[illegible] of day, as the
[illegible] ently
[illegible] by-

The bird that sank from heaven into dust.—
The battle hurtles long and loud
Between the mountains and the sea;
The yellow cloud
Crashes the woods in sunder tree by tree,
And struggling over land and main
The generations masterful
With greed and pain
Scatter upon the turf a brother's skull:
I walk the places where they drove
And sing my song where all is cursed.
Then, for my love,
The child will play again, the flower burst.

DEU. *What a strange mournful voice is hers!*
PYR. *No, no! I feel a happiness bringing leaves*
Upon the branches, and the night is less
Between now and to-morrow! Oh, to-morrow—
DEU. *Thine, woman, is a silly heart, and trust*
Is in thy being like a malady.
Father Prometheus, greatest of us all,
Avails not with his majestic arrogance
To wrench from God the blessing he denies.
And we be cursed! I know not wherefore, no,
I cannot say what mischief, thine or mine,
Merited punishment: but we be cursed
Beyond our father's valour to revoke,—
And I believe, to pay his awful deed,
He will hang out in anguish crucified
Upon the giddy ramparts of the world
While we mysteriously damned shall hide
Here at night's bottom to the last of time.

EPI. *Deukalion!*

DEU. *Here, father, this way home.*

EPI. *Deukalion!*

DEU. *Here, here! Thou seekest us?*
What is't?

EPI. *I've journeyed hopeless and too long,*
Nothing before but darkness and behind
This endless shadow of my memory.

PYR. *Poor heart! thou lovest overmuch the past.*
But happiness is toward, the night will end.

DEU. *Heed her not, Epimetheus! Thy brother*
Has spoiled her brain with promises and words.

EPI. *Where is he?*

DEU. *Come to fetch the fire again,*
To kindle back the world to what it was.

EPI. *The fool! He struggles forward evermore,*
Like one who stumbles; but the sadder thought
Never constrains him, that futurity
Is dead with phantoms of the things bygone,—

DEU. *Aye, and alive with sufferings that are.*
He's wild and rolls like whirlwind up a steep,
Leaving but ruin.

EPI. *When I consider time,*
Remembering all my pastimes and the haunts
Where clustered flowers erewhile that one by one
Shone either side the path of what I was,
My bosom fills more than to hold with pain,
And yearning, like a swallow in the void,
Strains aching, dropping down, down endlessly.

PYR. *Come nearer that I rest thee in my arms.*

PAN. [*singing*].
Many who have only dreamed of me

Have grown unhappy and lost their years.
They gather the daisies thoughtfully,
Then throw them away and burst in tears.
Their eyes are filled—for they looked so long—
With the sunset-light of my aureole;
Their lips will quiver to utter song,
And the spring lies swelling under their soul.
For their hand in a woman's hand is laid
And between a woman's breasts their brow.
For a while they feel no longer afraid
With the sky above and the earth below:
But never the whole and the fulness come.
Their eyes are blind with another light.
They walk through echoes and have no home,
Like shadows waving upon the night.

EPI. *Pandora's voice.*
PYR. *Obscure and pitiful.*
DEU. *What sawest thou on thy travel?*
EPI. *No daylight.*
Nor anything on before; but at my back
Remembrance made a weary song, chanting
The mellow seasons that have gone away.
DEU. *And bringest nothing?*
EPI. *No.*
DEU. *How profitless,*
Thou and thy brother, elders tho' ye be,
Worry the time out and defeat yourselves.
One storms gigantic up the heavens; thou
Triest to die with thine own memory.
PYR. *Leave him, Deukalion, for he is so sad.*
DEU. *Aye, 'tis we suffer their temerities,*

And back and forth, to ends we know not of,
Madden between to-morrow and yesterday.

PYR. *Father, be comforted! And if it please thee,*
According to thy fancy, nothing forced,
Sing us meanwhile a rune here in the night.
For song is very like a summer fern
Sweeter for dark; and we sad winter birds
Will dream a little while more pleasantly.

EPI. [*chanting*].
The noise in the eternal heart abates.
The valley of the world is blotted out,
And either end the boulders on the gates
Are pushed across and shut.
The mountains in the dark are growing small.
No wind is any more upon the lea.
The stone has frittered from the waterfall
Down rivers to the sea.
The uttermost is swelling out in void,
In total night, more cold and emptier
Around the ghost of that which is destroyed,
The breath of things that were.

[A *long silence.*]

PYR. *Hush, for I hear him.*

DEU. *Say!*

PYR. *Prometheus*
Is coming. All thro' my blood the pulses knock,
I see the flames—they crackle.

DEU. *Her brain is wild.*

EPI. *I feel like echoes of the lost daylight—*

PYR. *He comes, he comes. Nay, look how fast the light*
Rolls gaining on the dark and urges back
Like windy boulders of obscurity.

His *step! I hear him, I see him—Prometheus!*

PRO. [*shouting from far*].
This torch will light our lives. Rejoice! up, up!
I say we have the sunlight back again.

DEU. *How sharp a dazzle races the empty air!*
I see nothing.

EPI. *It reddens in my two eyes,*
My brain is needled thro' with pain.

PRO. [*rushing in with a torch, lights the pyre*].
Rejoice,
The lost is won! Our dignities once more
Resume their proper thrones, and we are men.

PYR. *Thy forehead shines like morning! on thy neck*
I lay my arms—but the light kills—

PRO. *No, come*
And gladden! Logs here and pitch and all that burns,
That kindles, flames. Bring, pile it high as heaven,
Along like rivers and across like fields!
'T has dawned at last, such dawn as ne'er before
Tore the wide sky. From out bottomless chasms
Fountains jet glittering up into the sky
And hailstone sparks descend, tumbling like sand
Over the mountains swollen in conflagration.

DEU. *Stay, Father, hear me!*

PRO. *I have it from the Gods.*
Aye, from the hearthstone of the Gods I caught
This fire and hope and knowledge won to us—
My torch be brandished in the face of Zeus!

EPI. *Brother, be softer in triumph or we die.*

PRO. *Still was it night, thick night, when I at the base*
Of their enormous mountain stood, around me
A blacker gloom, foliage and bearded firs,

All of a forest's heaviness: thro' which
Down from the summit wanderingly quired
Amazing echoes of a festival,
Of instruments and choral song. Below
Sounded, like vast itinerant herds afield
Under the night, the torrents rumbling on.
There I began. Sheer up the night, alone
And without fear, catching ahold of pines
To swing me higher or stay me from recoil,
I climbed. Beneath my trample brushwood crashed
In the spongy soil, and snapped the twigs short-off.
Behind, dislodged, stone after stone bounded
Down thumping to the depths. But straightaway
I groped thro' snarls of ragged boughs that scratched
My visage blind, and tore the weedy shrubs
Which like fine cordage knotted my feet back:
So floundered up the dumb dead humid night.
Soon thinned the forestry. From tree to tree
Espaced, the ground lay tamer,—moss and herbs,
A softness underfoot. Then, not a pine,
But blind and weary slopes of shale that passed
Upward in the deserted gloom. I gasped—
'Twas icy still and thin, and very sweet
With unseen flowers, the last of earthly things
Carelessly blooming in immensity,
Where still I mounted like an arrow shot
Up with revenge and scorn to the midnight clouds.
Sudden the windier air froze and my feet
Crunched snow which even in such a dark as was
Shone bluely with a smothered light away
To the summit. At my throat I felt the void;
It stung my sweated face. I stamped the crust,

And step by step ascending wilfully
Laddered the cold up skyward to the end.
Just then that music, which half heard before
And undistinguished down the steeps unfurled,
Struck quicker rhythm; and looking up I saw
Mid draperies of darkness hanging vague
A halo shining downwards, in the ice
Mirrored like vapour mazed with meteors.
In a last hurry I climbed. The freezing dark
Was all a tremor of song, and finally
A dim design of snowy mansion grew
Ghostly and lucid, carved of summer cloud,
A white flame tapering at the core of space.
And then methought the appalling night and gloom
Drew like an ocean's ebb sinkingly down,
I swimming out. The floor lay luminous,
As when by pale gray weather and no wind
A glossy lake at morning falls asleep:
Whence grading to the citadel for steps
An hundred plinths of crystal led. They cut
The mild light slant along their silver edge,
Describing circles and diminishing
Toward certain columns roundly poised atop.
Up to that place of supreme glory, I
Man of the niggard earth and god at heart
Mounted out of disaster to my place.
It seemèd daylight growing and diffused,
Splendid, melodious, and of such perfume
As warms upon a meadow at afternoon
Of cloudless summer; and another light,
Neither of sun nor moon, awaked the air
To radiance wreathing on the point of all.

This was his palace, vastly and circular,
Builded of lucent marble, with a film
Hung in its height, erratic, shadowing-in
Unlikely plants and wondrous ocean-flowers.
And placed about stood pillars very firm,
Where top to bottom slender flutings ran;
And around every pillar drew a belt
Mid-high, that brake the rods of light in twain;
And there, clamped in a sconce of gold each one
And cinct with silver snakes, the torches burned
Upholding flames of the everlasting fire,
The sacred fire that having once been ours
He stole again who names his own self God.

EPI. *Alas! thy scorn will drag his vengeance down.*

PRO. *Peace, man! He wronged me, and the day is mine.*
One of those torches is this in my hand.
It flamed to right where the entrance is, two bright
Iron-swung sheets of brass, firm-barred across
And bolted 'gainst the fearful universe:
While inside cried aloud perennial choirs
To a single note so puissant and superb
It seemed an ocean singing to the sun.
I heard, and seized the torch. In challenge too
Wrenching the clasp, I hurled it formless down
Before their gates and turned my feet away.
[*It thunders.*]

PYR. *Father, be calm.*

DEU. *O desolation and despair!*
Thou, wretched man, shalt be our ruin.

PYR. *Hush!*
The winds are up—

EPI. *It had to be—*

PYR. *Like streams*
Swirling before they burst.
DEU. *A thunder-cloud*
Unravels down out of the burning sky.
PRO. *I say, whate'er's achieved, once and for all*
Stands in defiance, and we at Nature's heart
Register signs of our nobility.
This is the symbol I have had my will,
Which down the crystal stairs into the depth
I bore, a little flame thro' darkness, won
From summits which henceforth are counted ours.
With it I've lit the world.—Look forth, my children!
All the unfolded earth, mountain and vale
Holding their fruits aloft, the knotty crags
Scattering colour, and the prairies green
With tuft and billow of infinite grass:
Of all their life your life is nourished.
Follow the rivers further to the sea
And launch your enterprise! The wilful soul
Goes forward to possess, and vindicates
From strength to strength the majesty of life.
EPI. *Alas!*
Nothing will teach thee infelicity.
The sunrise is not all: who shall forget
For stubbornness or greed the yesterdays
Which rivet us to the soil we come of? See,
The woman weeps.
PYR. [*to* PROMETHEUS]. *I'll follow on—heed not him—*
Despite exhaustion for the hope—
EPI. *The hope?*
What says she?
PRO. *More of truth than e'er thou knew'st.*

DEU. *Oh, this it is that whets the rusty scythe!*
And notwithstanding certainly we believe
It nothing profits so throughout the year
To strain, yet strain all the year thro' we must,
And for a hope! Thou mad'st it so! The worm
Which bores the parchèd glebe is happier,
The goaded oxen plodding for a bread
Not theirs, more calm—thou mad'st it so! A curse
Upon thee! May thy tortures pay our own,
Our stupid agonies that in the daylight now
Begin afresh!—I will not struggle more.

PRO. *He whines. A pity 'tis the world consists*
Of such: who using nature and themselves,
Suffer their task and clog with lamentation
The rush and furtherance of human things.
For hope, being had, suffices; in so much
We prosper, and the Gods are idle dreams
Strung in the void of our uncertain thoughts.
[*It thunders.*]

EPI. *Another day has been.*

DEU. *Thunder again!*
The eternal reason will be justified,
And truth descends against the haughty brain.

PYR. *How't darkens!*

PRO. [*soliloquising*]. *She too loses heart. At last,*
Whatever be done of large and generous,
Howe'er one's life be given, and freely all
Delight, affection, quiet sacrificed
For something bolder to the good of man,—
Yet at the last he will prefer disgrace
And hug his slavery, leaving him that strove
To fight damnation and despair alone.

PYR. *Ah me, the daylight vanishes in death.*
[*A cloud gradually falls through the scene, and all fades in gray obscurity.*]

PAN. [*singing*].
As an immortal nightingale
I sing behind the summer sky
Thro' leaves of starlight gold and pale
That shiver with my melody,
Along the wake of the full-moon
Far on to oceans, and beyond
Where the horizons vanish down
In darkness clear as diamond.

EPI. *On wings of memory the night returns.*
The great bird gires before he drop again.—
Sunlight and country that I knew! O sky!
Ye furl yourselves and wander shadowily
Into the endless backward of the heart.
PYR. *It blows and darkens in. Where is he?*
[*It thunders.*]
THE VOICES OF ZEUS.
Man, come with us, come with us, come away!
PRO. [*aside*].
His voice!
THE VOICES. *Come to receive thy certain pain.*
PRO. *Justice of God, malignant destiny,*
Delirious curse! how it confounds the brain
To see thee blast our strength, and day by day
With all thy crooked fingers here rip up
The patient fabric of our energy.
Over the endless harvest, o'er the home
We builded with great pain, for pastime thou

Spill'st putrefaction, and upon thy palm
The world shakes like an egg, to shut and crush.

THE VOICES.

Be ready, for the time is Now! We've come
To lead thee to the edge of wilderness.

PRO. *We'll die in battle. Come near.*

THE VOICES. *Thou canst not die.*
'Tis thine to struggle everlastingly.
Look o'er the world, unhappy wretch, and come!

PAN. [*singing*].

My dew is everywhere
Where things are;
I fall and flutter and fare,
Leaving a star
By the roads of earth, in the far
Paths of the air.

Mine is the milk to charm
In a mother's breast,
Sweet with her pain and warm
With her rest,
The life that asks for a nest
In her arm;

And mine is the violet
That so lies
In the evening of her wet
Sorrowful eyes.
For another thing may rise,
But her youth has set.

Nothing is less with me,
Nothing is lost.

For I smile on the earth and sea,
On the infinite host
Of the dead and the living, and most
On the yet-to-be.

PRO. *Pandora, how thou singest o'er my pain*
Yet of my humiliation nothing! Ah,
Farewell, and let thy voice for evermore
Sweeten the dreary acres of mankind.

THE VOICES.
Thy day is at an end.

PRO. *But not my deed!*
The light is theirs and I the giver thereof,
Long as blood beats within the human heart.—
Unhand me! Ah!

THE VOICES. *Wear now thy chains.*

PYR. *Who is't that chains? Where is he now?*

PRO. *Alone,*
Beyond thy arms, in other hands than thine.

THE VOICES.
Drag him on! for he balks the will of God.

PRO. *Yet does my work outstrip the penalty.*
Nothing may die or live infructuous,
And I'm immortal: for I join with Being,
And nothing in the universal sphere
But is.
'Twas with me for a while as with the sun
Upon the ocean: writing out in gold
The moving characters of highest day,
Which to dull creatures of the depth appeared
Fantastic and divine and possible.

THE VOICES.

Drag him away! The stubborn mind has burst.

PRO. *Many times I have died and yet shall die.*
For Nature rolls on, while across the chasms
From hill to hill and round from east to west
Voices pass on the echo to the stars.
So forms are laid aside, and if I lived,
I was the cresting of the tide wherein
An endless motion rose exemplified.

THE VOICES.

Bear him away, for evening falleth in.
[*The cloud lifts,* PROMETHEUS *has disappeared. A great sunset fills the scene.*]

PAN. [*singing*].
My soul of sunset every human day
In long sad colours on the evening dwells
And gives her solemn violet away
Over the quiet endlessness of hills.

Mild and gold burns from cloud to cloud, above
The obscurer fields, my pity for an hour;
And then life goes to sleep within my love,
The world is drawn together as a flower.

Labour at last within the soul is peace,
And faithful pain after a certain while
Like other things will strengthen and increase
And colour at the last into a smile.—

Rest in my bosom till thy day be due,
Until my day be finished at sunrise,
And I behold thee glittering thro' the blue
And playing in the sunset of my eyes.

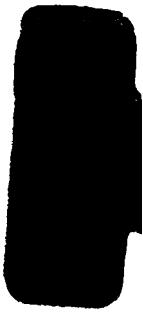
EPI. *The sunset comes to die now as of yore,—*
The sad recurrence of remembered things.
PYR. *He's gone to suffer, gone whither? Alas!*
Would I knew where his bleeding head will lie
To give my breast for pillow and avert
The dreadful vengeance feeding on his soul!—
How crimsonly the day declines! Come sleep,
Deukalion, for to-morrow brings again
The sun he gave us, and the hope—the life.

A LIMITED EDITION OF THREE HUNDRED & FIFTY-TWO COPIES OF THIS BOOK, OF WHICH THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE COPIES ARE FOR SALE, WAS PRINTED BY D. B. UPDIKE THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON, IN OCTOBER, MDCCCCII. OF THE EDITION THIS COPY IS NUMBER

47

THE [illegible] LIBRARY
[illegible]
BLOOMINGTON
CENTRAL RESERVE
[illegible]th ST.

1988



FLEX BINDING